

WEB DOCUMENT

Joint Affordable Housing Guidance

Introduction

South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council seek the delivery of affordable housing to meet housing need of those whose needs are not met by the market across the districts. Both councils identify the need for affordable homes as a key priority within their Corporate Plans.

[SODC Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#)

[VoWH Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#)

Affordable housing is defined nationally through the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF), and is key to addressing housing need in the districts, where house prices and market rents are significantly higher than the national average.

Well-designed, high-quality affordable homes also play a very important role in the health and welfare of our communities, as well as contributing to carbon reduction.

Both council's Local Plans seek the delivery of affordable housing on new developments through specific policies. These are detailed in our adopted Local Plans below.

[South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035](#)

[Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031](#)

In addition to the policies and accompanying text within the Local Plans, both Councils have published supplementary guidance which is also directly relevant to the delivery of affordable housing. This addresses matters such as design quality and layout.

Planning applications for residential developments are considered against the relevant policy in the councils Development Plan including both their local plans and neighbourhood plans. Regard is also given to national policy, supplementary planning documents, Corporate Plans and planning guidance.

Delivering high quality affordable homes

The councils have published a number of documents which relate to the delivery of housing, including affordable housing, which aims to provide additional information and guidance on the delivery of new homes across the districts. The links to these documents can be found within this page. It also sets out expected standards required to enable a development proposal to meet policy compliance.

Prospective planning applicants should be aware that the information provided in this document is not exhaustive in relation to the delivery of affordable housing. This document pulls out relevant planning policies for affordable housing. Other policies contained within the Local Plans, together with those of Neighbourhood Plans, are relevant. As an on-line resource, this document will be updated on a regular basis in order to ensure that it remains up to date.

South Oxfordshire District Council

Existing policies and guidance

Local Plan 2035

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (adopted December 2020) is the key delivery document. It should therefore form the starting reference point in the preparation of a planning application. It contains policies that secure a specified level of affordable housing on most new residential developments. The following policies directly related to affordable housing are:

H9 Affordable Housing

This policy specifies the type of development where we will seek the provision of affordable housing, together with amount, tenure type and other general requirements contained in the accompanying text. It is a key policy aimed at ensuring a supply of new affordable homes across the district.

H10 Exception Sites and Entry Level* Housing Schemes

This policy addresses the need for small-scale affordable developments where they would not otherwise be permitted. Most often referred to as Rural Exception Sites, there should be a demonstrable and robustly evidenced local need, through a local housing needs survey. Development proposals should reflect the need for affordable dwelling types identified in the survey.

*Following a Written Ministerial Statement (24 May 2021) Entry Level housing is now largely replaced by First Homes.

National guidance has not yet been updated to reflect this change.

H11 Housing Mix

It is important that new developments provide a mix of accommodation that contributes to meeting the needs all households. The mix of housing should have regard to the Council's latest evidence and Neighbourhood Development Plan evidence for the relevant area. H11 aims to meet the requirement for a suitable mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet varying needs. This includes minimum accessibility and adaptability standards, including minimum space standards published by government - [Technical housing standard - Nationally described space standard](#)

H12 Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing

Building or designing your own home could be a more affordable way for many people to become home owners. The Council strongly support initiatives that provides opportunities for people to design and/or build their own home. Self-Build and Custom-Build housing does not necessarily fall within the definition of Affordable Housing, and prospective planning applicants should establish this through early discussion with the council's Affordable Housing team.

H13 Specialist Accommodation for Older People

Housing and health are inextricably linked, and the value of living in a suitable home in a sustainable location becomes even more important as people get older. Being able to continue living independently for as long as possible may require some level of support which could be provided through adaptations to the home or receiving social care visits at home. Whilst this policy is not directly linked to affordable housing, it should be taken into account where older persons accommodation is intended to meet the Affordable Housing definition.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

Any proposal should be in accordance with Neighbourhood plans unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise. A full list of current and emerging neighbourhood plans, together with links to the individual plans themselves can be found [here](#)

Additional Guidance and documents

Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The council can require developers (under what are called 'Section 106 Agreements') to contribute towards the infrastructure needed to mitigate the direct impact of their development and to meet planning policy requirements. This can be in the form of financial contributions, the provision of affordable housing, the provision of land or restriction of use of land or the direct delivery of facilities.

The council is currently considering the adoption of a revised Developer Contribution SPD, which will be considered for adoption shortly. The revised draft, and the current (April 2016) Developer Contribution SPD can be viewed [here](#)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is money we get from housing developers as part of their permission to build new homes in our district. The money is used to fund community facilities, such as new schools, roads and healthcare facilities to support people moving into the area. Further information, together with the council's CIL Charging Schedule can be found [here](#)

Vale of White Horse District Council

Existing Policies and Guidance

Local Plan 2031

The Vale of White Horse District's Local Plan is divided into two parts: Local Plan 2031 Part 1 was adopted at Full Council in December 2016; and Local Plan 2031 Part 2 was adopted by Full Council on Wednesday 9 October 2019.

Core Policy 22: Housing Mix (LP Part 1)

The policy seeks to ensure that the right mix of housing sizes, types and tenures are provided on all residential development sites. The mix of housing should have regard to the Council's latest evidence and Neighbourhood Development Plan evidence for the relevant area.

Core Policy 24: Affordable Housing (LP Part 1)

Securing new affordable housing on-site as part of new developments is the most effective way to provide new supply. The onsite provision of completed units by a developer is the Council's preferred approach and it is expected that the vast majority of residential developments will be capable of delivering affordable housing on the same site. This Policy principally addresses amount and tenure split.

Core Policy 25: Rural Exception Sites (LP Part 1)

The 'rural exception site' policy is aimed at providing homes for local people, who are unable to rent or buy a property on the open market in rural locations. Schemes should be supported in principle by the local community, as represented by the relevant parish council.

Core Policy 26: Accommodating Current and Future needs of the Aging Population (LP Part 1)

The district has an ageing population. Over the plan period the 65+ age group is projected to increase by 58 % between 2010 and 2030 to represent 26 % of the district's total population by 2030. The high level of growth in this age group is a key demographic driver and should be adequately addressed in the Local Plan 2031 to ensure that housing supply addresses the current and future needs of older people.

Development Policy 1: Self and Custom build (LP Part 2)

The Council will support the provision of plots for sale to self and custom builders. Self and Custom-Build plots may contribute towards affordable housing provision and will need to comply with Core Policy 24: Affordable Housing.

Development Policy 2: Space Standards (LP Part 2)

This policy covers all tenures, but includes specific requirements in relation to affordable homes. The Nationally Described Space Standards identify standards for the space within new dwellings and are suitable for application across all tenures. The standards set out requirements for the minimum gross internal (floor) area and storage of new dwellings. Part M(4) of the Building Regulations 2010 sets out the accessibility standards for dwellings, with requirements set out in three categories.

Neighbourhood plans

Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

Neighbourhood plans are a material consideration in decision making, and any proposal should therefore be in accordance with such plans. A full list of current and emerging neighbourhood plans, together with links to the individual plans themselves can be found [here](#)

Additional Guidance and documents

[Developer Contributions SPD](#)

Vale of White Horse District Council formally adopted its revised Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on 1 October 2021. The SPD came into effect on 1 November 2021

The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance on planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), which are more commonly known as S106 Agreements and are a mechanism used by councils to mitigate the direct impacts of a particular development.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Vale of White Horse District Council is classed as a 'charging authority' and may charge CIL in respect of development that takes place in the District. Further information, together with the council's CIL Charging Schedule can be found [here](#)

Joint council guidance and documents

Some guidance is common to both South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council. Where it may be applicable to the delivery of affordable homes, it is listed below.

Joint Design Guide

The Joint design guide is intended to help you to develop the design of any proposal and it has been prepared to guide you through all steps and stages of the design process. The design guide is intended to assist landowners,

developers, applicants, agents, designers and planners through all stages of the design and planning process to achieve high quality and sustainable development. The guide is not specific to the delivery of affordable housing, it is applicable across all tenures.

First Homes

First Homes is a low-cost home ownership tenure which was introduced by the government in 2021. It now forms part of the affordable housing tenure requirement on most new developments. As this requirement was introduced after the adoption of both Local Plans, the councils have published an interim guidance note:

[First Homes Guidance Note - South Oxfordshire](#)

[First Homes Guidance Note - Vale of White Horse](#)

Housing Delivery Strategy

The councils will soon be publishing a new Joint Housing Delivery Strategy. The strategy will appear here once adopted by both councils.

Net Zero Carbon Tool Kit

The Net-Zero Toolkit (jointly produced by West Oxfordshire District Council, Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean District Council) has been designed to assist in the planning, design and construction of both new build and retrofit housing projects and we consider this to be a useful guide when considering energy efficiency measures in development proposals. Though not specific to the delivery of affordable homes, it is a highly relevant document which should be taken into consideration.

[Net Zero Carbon Toolkit - South Oxfordshire](#)

[Net Zero Carbon Toolkit - Vale of White Horse](#)

Our Delivery Partners

The councils work with a range of partners to deliver new affordable homes in our districts. Our Registered Provider (housing association) partners play a key role in the delivery of new homes. Early engagement between prospective developers and Registered Providers can help significantly in bringing forward high-quality developments which contribute to the creation of mixed and balanced communities across the districts. A list of our Registered Provider partners currently active in the districts can be obtained from the Affordable Housing Team at the email address below.

Summary

This joint guidance note brings together relevant policies and guidance associated with the delivery of affordable housing in both districts. It is intended to assist with the delivery of high-quality, policy compliant, affordable housing development. The policies and guidance listed are not exhaustive, and any planning application should ensure conformity with all appropriate national and locally published policy and guidance. Specific queries regarding the delivery of new affordable homes can be addressed to affordablehousingteam@southandvale.gov.uk

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